



**Come Together:
Fifty Years of *Abbey Road***

**An academic conference hosted by the
University of Rochester Institute for Popular Music
and
The Eastman School of Music**

**September 27-29, 2019
Rochester, New York**

Schedule and Abstracts

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Abstracts

Friday, September 27

**9:00-10:30 Session 1 (Hatch Recital Hall),
Chair: Katie Kapurch (Texas State University)**

Walter Everett (University of Michigan)
“The Mellow Depth of Melody in *Abbey Road*”

This talk is in response to a request from Mark Lewisohn this past summer for a comment on the abundance of melody in *Abbey Road*. I soon recognized this as a very useful approach to the album, which overflows with songs that relate to each other in both parallel and contrasting ways, particularly in terms of melodic content. Not only do featured lead vocal lines possess their own mature beauty, but both vocal and instrumental countermelodies—a crucial trait of middle-period Beatles—hold striking significance. I plan to discuss: how ornamentation varies repetitions, the ways in which a song’s formal structure impacts melodic growth, the role of rhythm in uniting melodic motives across the LP, and the tunes within tunes in considering structural aspects of melody.

Kenneth Womack (Monmouth University)
“The Long One: Producing *Abbey Road* with George Martin and the Beatles”

This paper traces the genesis of the Long One, the symphonic suite that closes *Abbey Road*—and, in many ways, the Beatles’ career. Drawing upon commentary from George Martin, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and Alan Parsons, it explores the ideation, composition, performance, and technical knowhow behind the medley’s construction from May through August 1969.

**10:45-12:15 Session 2 (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: Robert Fink (UCLA)**

Katie Kapurch (Texas State University)
“Something in the Lens: Pattie Boyd and the Art of Looking”

Informed by my recent interviews with Pattie Boyd, this talk explores the artistry of Boyd’s work as a model. Although Linda McCartney also made looking her career, I focus on Boyd because her artistry as a model warrants attention that requires some historical and theoretical context. Analyzing Boyd’s iconicity leads to a richer view of the so-called muse’s role in the Beatles story, as well as insight into “Something,” a song she arguably inspired. I say arguably because there are competing accounts related to the provenance of this song. Regardless of what Harrison eventually says, I use the lyrics of “Something” to organize ideas related to the artistry of Boyd’s iconic looks.

Mark Spicer (Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY)
“*Abbey Road* as Proto-Progressive Rock”

No generic label is more hotly contested by rock historians and fans than the term “progressive.” This talk will situate the late work of the Beatles—and *Abbey Road* in particular—within the early critical discourse of “progressive pop” and “progressive rock” among rock’s critics and practitioners. My analysis will focus on those musical elements of the album that influenced emerging progressive rock acts of the time, including large-scale and accumulative forms, complex rhythms and layered textures, the Moog synthesizer, and borrowings from classical music. I will draw comparisons with important debut albums and singles by the likes of Genesis, Jethro Tull, Yes, King Crimson, and Emerson, Lake & Palmer, all of which travel musically on the path laid out by *Abbey Road*.

2:00-3:30 Session 3a (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: Mark Spicer (Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY)

Brett Clement (Ball State University)
“The B Sections of *Abbey Road*”

Discussions of form in *Abbey Road* have largely focused on the innovative design of the Side 2 medley. One wonders, however, what might be learned from a closer look at the more conventional AABA forms that populate the remainder of the album. In this presentation, I address this question through an analysis of the album’s B sections, which I broadly define as the music occurring after two rotations of A material and before the third (vocal) rotation of the A section. Covach (2006) observes a trajectory across the band’s career from a “craftsman” to an “artist” approach, whereby AABA form is strongly associated with craftsman-like techniques. By outlining the range of B-section types found in *Abbey Road* and by contextualizing their relationship to earlier examples, I hope to better situate the album in the larger Beatles corpus.

Joel Friedman (Catholic University)
“George Harrison’s ‘Something’: Sinatra’s Favorite Len-Mac Song”

While the Sinatra “quote” is used here in jest, there is *something* to it. Besides the beauty and brilliance of the whole, and in the details, Harrison’s song *is* a very Lennon & McCartney song. The more flexible rhythmic setting of his lyric—some phrases on the beat, others off—is more in line with Lennon & McCartney’s typical language, and is in marked contrast to the simpler rigidity of his earlier songs, such as “I Need You” and “If I Needed Someone.” But most notable is Harrison’s adoption of a common Lennon and McCartney device: a four-note descending chromatic line that drives and colors the harmonic motion. This type of voice-leading, while not characteristic of Harrison’s earlier pre-1968 Beatle songwriting, was very characteristic of Lennon and McCartney’s Beatles output. This presentation will explore this motive and its variants—inversion and diatonic flavors—as well as how it is systematically and sophisticatedly used by Harrison in his song “Something.”

Beth Hiser (Baldwin Wallace University)
“Oh, That Magic Feeling: Extended Plagal Progressions on *Abbey Road*, Side 2”

Several scholars have studied extended plagal progressions in the music of the Beatles. Dominic Peddler considers the soulful ambiguity of such progressions as a contrast to the confident control of authentic progressions and finds that they provide a “sublimely appropriate musical backdrop for their lyrics.” He believes that McCartney must have known implicitly that the double-plagal progression is “less tense and more static than its mirror image, II-V-I.” Walter Everett has sketched out the tonal structure of the entire Side 2 medley, beginning with “You Never Give Me Your Money,” where he finds functional double-

plagal neighbor harmonies in the codetta, and also where the seed of the bVII harmony was planted, taking McCartney “away from the strong tension involving V and I.” I am interested in investigating the way in which extended plagal (and by contrast, extended authentic) progressions shape the experience of *Abbey Road*, Side 2.

Session 3b (Sproull Atrium, Miller Center)
Chair: Jim LeBlanc (Cornell University)

Kit O’Toole (Chicago, IL)

“From the Swamp to the Mersey: “Oh! Darling” and Its Debt to Swamp Pop”

From their beginnings as the Quarrymen to their final album, the Beatles drew from a remarkably diverse selection of genres. Country, blues, and R&B stand as the most obvious, while other styles such as music hall and blue beat also permeate their music. In what became their final recording, *Abbey Road* appeared to be a “back to basics” record, eschewing the psychedelia of *Sgt. Pepper* or *Magical Mystery Tour* in favor of straightforward rock and pop. Some songs, however, represent a subtle kind of experimentation, incorporating lesser-known musical styles. One such example, the Paul McCartney composition “Oh! Darling,” at first seems a straightforward ode to the blues with a touch of Fats Domino. However, its roots reach even deeper than that, specifically to a uniquely American genre called “swamp pop.” This presentation will examine the history of swamp pop and how the Beatles may have been exposed to it.

Mark Osteen (Loyola University Maryland)

“I’ll Never Make It Alone’: ‘Oh! Darling’ in Context”

Among the musical triumphs of the Beatles’ *Abbey Road*, Paul McCartney’s “Oh! Darling” has been lauded for his virtuoso vocal performance but has otherwise been regarded as little more than a “carefully crafted replica of a familiar type of rhythm-and-blues ballad” (Jonathan Gould) and dismissed as lightweight. This paper aims to elevate the song’s critical stature by describing how it emerges from a nexus of influences and by delineating its musical and lyrical relationships with other songs on *Abbey Road*. By scrutinizing the pretenses and contexts for “Oh! Darling,” the paper reveals how an artist who makes a song never makes it alone. In so doing, it uses McCartney’s homage to and elaboration upon the music that shaped him to enrich and expand our understanding of authorship in composition.

Robert Rodriguez (Chicago, IL)

“The Lennon and McCartney Collaboration: Myth vs. Reality During the Beatles’ Final Year”

Through the weight of hyperbolic interviews given during the post-collective years and a generation of writers inclined to take the former Beatles’ words at face value and repeat them instead of going where the evidence leads, a warped perspective has taken root on the true nature of John Lennon and Paul McCartney’s creative partnership during 1969. But a close examination of contemporaneous evidence points to a higher level of creative interaction than has been previously reported. Further, it reveals that the high-level of collaboration between the four Beatles (and their producer) not only kept going despite the non-musical external forces dividing them, but that it was necessary in order to produce the results released as the *Abbey Road* album. Not only was there not the creative estrangement as described in interviews given by both John and Paul, but there was a renewed spirit of musical discovery early on in the sessions, described publicly by John, in direct contradiction to his words following their split. (Exactly *why* they felt the need to downplay their unity will be discussed as well.)

**3:45-5:15 Session 4a (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: Nicole Biamonte (McGill University)**

Mark Anson-Cartwright (Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY)
“Dreams, Endings, and Cycles on *Abbey Road*”

Side two of *Abbey Road*—especially the tour de force known as the “medley”—has long been admired as, arguably, the Beatles’ crowning artistic achievement. Yet the significance of the album’s brief concluding song, “Her Majesty,” has not been explored much. This tiny gem made it onto the album by accident, having been first recorded as part of the medley between “Mean Mr. Mustard” and “Polythene Pam,” and then cut from that context and appended to the album (Lewisohn 1992:327-328). I shall argue that “Her Majesty” has a logical place on the album, since it articulates three interrelated themes and structural principles: the dream, the double ending, and the cycle.

Timothy Koozin (University of Houston)
“Keyboard Playing in the Beatles’ *Abbey Road*: Topic, Persona, and Social Discourse”

This paper employs analytical methodologies of topic theory, musical gesture, and virtual agency in an examination of keyboard playing in the Beatles’ *Abbey Road*. If we interpret musical interaction in *Abbey Road* as a musical exchange in which each part assumes an individual character or virtual persona, then the keyboard player occupies an interesting position in the social discourse, one that is somewhat distanced from the essential interplay of voices, guitars, bass, and drums in a pop-rock group. While keyboard accompaniment may support or augment the persona of the singer-songwriter, this study of *Abbey Road* explores how keyboard playing may also foreground important voice-leadings, harmonies, and textural builds in rhythmic complexity with keyboard-idiomatic orientation that influences gestural shape, sound quality, and affective meaning. In addition, keyboard parts project musical topics that are essential in shaping the distinctive character of songs on *Abbey Road*, activating nostalgic contexts associated with gospel organ, honky-tonk piano, and boogie-woogie, as well as cultural codes aligned with harpsichord, passages of learned counterpoint, Moog synthesizer, and psychedelia. This study of keyboard playing in *Abbey Road* explores the music as social discourse, showing how interactions among the performers form multileveled agential relationships that span groupings of songs and the full album.

David Thurmaier (University of Missouri, Kansas City)
“‘When Paul Got an Idea or an Arrangement in his Head . . .’: Imagination, Experimentation, and Transitions in ‘Maxwell’s Silver Hammer’”

For a song so mercilessly maligned, described as “more of Paul’s granny music” (John Lennon), “fruity” (George Harrison), “the worst track we ever had to record; it went on for fucking weeks” (Ringo Starr), “Rococo craftsmanship on a Gothic but hollow shell” (Walter Everett), and the “single recording (that) shows why the Beatles broke up” (Ian McDonald), Paul McCartney’s “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer” contains attractive musical features that demonstrate its composer’s effortless flow of ideas. Moreover, the amount of rehearsals of “Maxwell” captured on tape reveal genuine compositional collaboration and experimentation between the Beatles that belies the harsh criticism of McCartney in particular. The song’s path from its creation in India, to its extensive rehearsal during the “Get Back” sessions, to its completion in the summer of 1969 for *Abbey Road* illuminates McCartney’s compositional thinking, rehearsal style, and treatment of his “music hall” songs, with “Maxwell” the latest in a sequence including “When I’m 64,” “Your Mother Should Know,” and “Honey Pie.” My paper examines and traces the varied attempts undertaken to find a suitable transition between the verse and chorus of the song.

**Session 4b (Sproull Atrium, Miller Center)
Chair: Victor Coelho (Boston University)**

Rodney Nevitt (University of Houston)

"Abbey Road and the History of Beatles Album Cover Design"

My paper will be a close reading of the *Abbey Road* album cover within the history of Beatles album cover design. It will be based on research from my book project, *The Beatles and the Album as Object: Pop Music in the Era of Pop Art*. I want to move beyond the well-known stories of the origins of the *Abbey Road* cover and understand the cover's connections to Pop Art and photography in the 1960s, which had evolved throughout the whole series of their album covers.

Eric Rosenberg (Tufts University)

"There's a Place: Leaving Abbey Road for Good"

The cover photo of The Beatles *Abbey Road* album has elicited myriad speculative words regarding its possible meaning(s). Quite naturally, conjecture has striven most commonly to produce unity of interpretation, balancing positivity with negation, affirmation with rejection, a sense of the eternal with mortality. If Paul is nakedly dead, then John is immortally God-like. If the group is crossing the street away from the EMI building, the Abbey Road studio still looms as the site of their extraordinary achievement over the previous seven years. If the Beatles each appear so distinctively clad as to seem utterly, individually distinguished from each other, their status as group—their making of the lp itself, its music—is still generative of the image in the first place. A more restrictive, even reductive reading of the cover image, supported as well by the photo that makes up the back of the sleeve, is possible. Essentialized formally, The Beatles walk definitively away from the Abbey Road studio building. There is no indication given by the visual politics of the image that any kind of return will be affected at any time or under any conditions. In other words, the hermeneutic implications of the cover of *Abbey Road* constitute a *document* of the group's end, their break-up for good. In fact, this is what they are literally doing before our eyes: ending, enacting no return.

Paul Harris (University of Puget Sound)

"Badfinger and Mal Evans: Carrying On Till Tomorrow"

The four-piece British rock band Badfinger was one of the most successful acts signed to Apple Records prior to the breakup of the Beatles. The *"White Album"* and *Let it Be* are routinely cited as reflecting the dissolution of the Beatles, yet it is *Abbey Road* where many of the final collaborations actually occurred, and during which so many solo projects were simultaneously taking shape in anticipation of the looming end of the band. It is no surprise that Badfinger's career was indelibly marked by the end of the Beatles, from their unwitting role in Paul-is-dead rumors through to their own auto-demolition via suicide as Apple's mid-70s dysfunction hobbled its extended family. Badfinger's earliest Apple recordings were made amidst the *Abbey Road* sessions and broadly reflect the disintegration of the Beatles during what was nonetheless a period of great creativity. One of Badfinger's most successful songs, "No Matter What," was surprisingly produced by long-time Beatles roadie, fixer, all-around gopher, and minor musical collaborator Mal Evans, most likely because he was central in bringing Badfinger into the Apple fold, and because he was aspiring to become a producer as the disbanding of the Beatles became inevitable. What scant material exists on Evans suggests that he was particularly despondent over the Beatles' breakup and, of necessity, aspired to reinvent himself as a producer. Evans' Beatles roots are apparent in "No Matter What," which harkens back to mid-60s Beatles with its song form of AABA with abbreviated reprise. In classic Beatles fashion, the second B section is texturally thickened with additional harmony vocals including a chromatic descending vocal line that introduces challenging

dissonances. Who was behind these subtle details—was Badfinger’s considerable musicality in play, or had the Beatles’ roadie-cum-collaborator learned his lessons that well over the preceding decade?

7:30-8:45 Keynote (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair and moderator: Kenneth Womack (Monmouth University)

Ken Townsend (engineer and General Manager, Abbey Road Studios)
“In Conversation: My Years at Abbey Road”

9:00-10:00 After Hours (Hatch Recital Hall)
Moderator: John Covach (Eastman School of Music/University of Rochester)

Jerry Hammack (Toronto, ON)
“The Beatles Recording Reference Manual: Recording ‘Come Together’”

Saturday, September 28

9:00-10:30 Session 5 (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: Andrew Flory (Carleton College)

Cevin Soling (Harvard University)
“‘Maxwell’s Silver Hammer’: The Beatles’ Neglected Dark Masterpiece”

For all the scrutiny the Beatles music has endured from academics, music critics, and fans, a number of Paul McCartney’s songs have nevertheless evaded a proper analysis of their lyrics and the lyrics’ relationship to the music. This list includes “Paperback Writer,” “Penny Lane,” “Eleanor Rigby,” “Back in the USSR,” “Helter Skelter,” “Lovely Rita,” “Obladi Oblada,” “Golden Slumbers,” and “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer.” Written just one year after the Summer of Love and recorded nine months later without Lennon present, “Maxwell” jauntily recounts the exploits of a serial killer. The choice of weapon is especially notable. Pete Seeger’s progressive movement anthem, “If I Had a Hammer,” established the hammer as the emblem of justice that was adopted by, and thematically central to, the folk scene that inspired hippie culture. Radically undermining the optimistic ethos of the 1960’s, McCartney’s protagonist not only escapes justice, he literally murders the arbiter of justice—a judge, with the symbol of justice. Seeger’s “hammer of justice” hammers out love between brothers and sisters whereas McCartney’s hammer is not simply the tool of a homicidal psychopath, it is the enforcer of nihilism. The most psychologically horrifying aspect of the song is its pataphysical inspiration as averred by McCartney. From this vantage, nihilism emerges as an imaginary solution to philosophical problems. That these problems are spelled out to be human relations, social institutions, and aspirational ideals is profoundly dark and the vaudevillian music grotesquely highlights an existential absurdism that transcends the song.

Matthew Schneider (High Point University)
“Following the Bard: Shakespeare and the *Abbey Road* Medley”

In Barry Miles’ *Many Years from Now*, Paul McCartney said “I wanted (the *Abbey Road* medley) to end with a little meaningful couplet, so I followed the Bard and wrote a couplet.” That lyric—“And in the end, the love you take/Is equal to the love you make”—aptly captures the Beatles’ core message in what John Lennon praised as a “cosmic, philosophical line.” It also raises the question of Shakespeare’s influence on the Beatles. Though in 1965 John claimed to “hate Shakespeare,” Paul admired the Bard of Stratford-on-Avon from his school days, and Shakespeare’s works pop up at regular intervals in the Beatles’ career. For the

1964 television special *Around the Beatles*, the group performed the mechanicals' play from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Flourishing a false nose as if it were Yorick's skull, Paul quotes half a line of Hamlet's first soliloquy ("O that this too too sallied flesh would melt") in *A Hard Day's Night*. Beatle friend Peter Sellers impersonated Laurence Olivier as Richard III reciting "A Hard Day's Night" as if it were the "summer of discontent" speech for the 1965 Granada Television special *The Music of Lennon & McCartney*. Dialogue from a radio performance of *King Lear* bleeds into the fadeout of "I Am the Walrus." Though his presence in the Beatles' music is mostly incidental, Shakespeare looms large in Paul McCartney's evolution as a songwriter.

Elizabeth Randell Upton (UCLA)

"'Because' and The Beatles' Vocal Ensemble Styles"

John Lennon's gentle dreamlike song "Because" is one of the highlights of the Beatles 1969 album *Abbey Road*, the last album they recorded as a group. This song is unusual among Beatles' recordings because of its complex three-part harmonies, featuring the combined voices of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison, accompanied by atypical instrumentation of guitar, bass, Moog synthesizer, and electric harpsichord. Overdubbing multiplies each voice by three, resulting in the rich sound of a 9-voice ensemble. In the overall structure of the album, "Because" provides a transition between the individual songs that proceed it and the medley that makes up the bulk of the second side of the album. Its floating harmonies change the mood of the album from contemporary rock and pop to one of timelessness, signaling to the listener that what will follow will also be special, while the use of the same vocal texture within the medley encourages listeners to hear the second side as a coherent whole. Along with the concluding medley, "Because" can be understood as a self-consciously valedictory celebration of the Beatles' musical and vocal collaboration. Combined with solo vocal turns from all four individual Beatles on the first side of *Abbey Road*, the exquisite harmony singing of "Because" completes *Abbey Road's* summation of the Beatles' vocal texture.

10:30-10:45 Poster session open (Mahar Green Room)

Paul Jenkins (Franklin Pierce University) and Hugh Jenkins (Union College)

"Teaching *Abbey Road*"

Abbey Road is often regarded as the final example of the Beatles' famous group ethos. Though the band was coming apart at the seams outside the studio, during these sessions they managed to put aside their differences to produce a final masterpiece by swallowing their pride. One approach to teaching *Abbey Road* is thus to explore the themes of separation and togetherness by asking students to identify examples from representative songs and put them into the context of the band's disintegration.

Katie Kapurch and Jon Marc Smith (Texas State University)

"Billy Preston to Blac Rabbit: Remixing 'I Want You (She's So Heavy)'"

Our poster shows how black artists have contributed to the recording and subsequent performing of "I Want You (She's So Heavy)." Preston's positive influence in the studio amid the fracturing Fabs is well known, earning him a rightful claim to the coveted "fifth Beatle" status. Preston participated in multiple takes of the song, alternating between keyboard and Hammond organ, as well as contributing vocals on some occasions. Over the years, several black artists—including George Benson, Booker T. and the MG's, and Eddie Hazel—have recorded notable covers of "I Want You." Fifty years after Preston, Blac Rabbit is touring North America with Beatles covers, including "I Want You," as well as their own Beatles-inspired originals. We argue the fifty years of covers leading up to Blac Rabbit's reveal a

continuity between the Beatles early and late material, showing the availability rock's black foundation in latter Beatles songs, as well as their influence on subsequent black artists.

10:45-12:15 Session 6 (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: A. Joan Saab (University of Rochester)

Noriko Manabe (Temple University)

“Abe Road’: Kuwata Keisuke’s Political Parody at the End of a Japanese Era”

In May 2009, when the Japanese LDP government was on the ropes, Kuwata Keisuke, lead singer of the Japanese rock band Southern All Stars, performed a parody of *Abbey Road* on his weekly television show. Backed by a band performing an uncanny cover of the album, he rewrote the lyrics into political commentary on corruption in Japanese politics, national debt, climate change, North Korean missiles, American military in Okinawa, and capital punishment. While Japanese recording artists rarely engage in politics, Kuwata got away with his rebellious gesture because he presented the show as a “mishearing” of a famous album. Using phonetic charts, I will show how he chose Japanese words whose consonants and vowels approximated those of the English lyrics and pronounced them to sound like English. Only by presenting his acrid commentary as a cover of this most-loved album, thus framing it as humorous entertainment, was Kuwata, as an entertainer, able to criticize Japanese politicians publicly. Just as *Abbey Road*, the Beatles' final album, represented the end of an era in rock history, “Abe Road” captured the end of an era in Japanese democracy.

Ivan Tan (Brown University)

“Groove and Teleology on McLemore Ave”

In 1969, Booker T. and the MG's found themselves at a creative impasse, frustrated with their roles as sidemen and an apparent lack of support for their musical ambitions by their label (Stax). After hearing The Beatles' *Abbey Road*, however, keyboardist Booker T. Jones was inspired by their desire to “push the limit” and “reinvent themselves,” and decided that his band should record their own version of *Abbey Road* in response. Released a few months later, *McLemore Avenue* largely preserves the melodic, harmonic, and formal structure of the original songs, but combines them with the tight grooves characteristic of Southern soul. This paper examines the teleological and non-teleological aspects of *McLemore Avenue* in connection with Booker T. and the MG's musical idiolect and aesthetic aspirations. In particular, the reordering of tracks and addition or lengthening of instrumental solo sections disrupt the large-scale goal-directed motion found on Side 2 of *Abbey Road*, allowing Jones et al. to transform individual songs into the Stax style.

Philippe Gonin (University of Burgundy Franche-Comté)

“Electronic Sound: The Beatles and the Moog Synthesizer”

“Two oscillators, two amplifiers: four modules, i. e. four small metal cabinets aligned side by side, whose external face has knobs to turn and plugs to connect. If there wasn't a separate keyboard, connected by a few wires, you would think we were dealing with a small sophisticated telephone exchange.” Laurent de Wilde explains (*Les Fous du Son*), describing the Moog Synthesizer. In May 1969, George Harrison released his new album, *Electronic Sound*, produced exclusively with this new electronic instrument. He obtained his Moog in late 1968 and brought it to Abbey Road; the Beatles used it on several songs from their upcoming album, *Abbey Road*. As Everett writes, “*Abbey Road* contains the only appearances of a modular synthesizer on a Beatles record.” This paper aims to decipher how the Beatles used this new instrument. First, we will focus on the birth of the Moog synthesizer and discuss the major role played by Beaver, Krause and Wendy Carlos in its expansion into the world of pop music. Then we will look at how George Harrison (in his solo album) and the Beatles used it in *Abbey Road*.

1:00-2:15 **Poster session continues (Mahar Green Room)**

2:15-3:45 **Session 7 (Hatch Recital Hall)**

Chair: William Moylan (University of Massachusetts, Lowell)

Robert Fink (UCLA)

“He Bad Production: *Abbey Road* as Timbral Journey”

When the Beatles’ *Abbey Road* was released in September 1969, many critics found themselves disappointed in the actual sound of the album. Thanks to electronics changes in the Abbey Road studio’s new eight-track studio setup, a new drum kit for Ringo, and the decision to record in stereo, the jangling immediacy of the classic 1960s Beatles records was lost. But something else was gained: a wider tonal spectrum, and the possibility of using aspects of timbre Lennon championed as “pure sound”—varying degrees of sonic saturation, control of high and low frequencies, and sharp contrasts between harmonics and noise—as a structural and expressive force.

A. Joan Saab (University of Rochester)

“Yoko Ono: In Her Own Right”

While much Beatles scholarship considers Yoko Ono mainly in the context of the Beatles and their music, this paper will explore Ono’s work as an artist in a context shaped by her own aesthetics and creative activity.

3:45-4:00 **Poster session continues (Mahar Green Room)**

4:00-5:30 **Session 8 (Hatch Recital Hall)**

Cory Hunter (University of Rochester)

Victor Coelho (Boston University)

“Performance, Composition, and the Historical Moment of *Abbey Road*”

The release of *Abbey Road* in 1969 coincides with an exhilarating emergence of genres, landmark albums, and performance techniques in rock music: the wide stylistic template revealed by Woodstock; Tommy, Led Zeppelin, virtuosity, improvisation, the dramatic impact of performance, the production of the live show, the rise of the lead vocalist and the guitar God, more sophisticated gear; relevance. In contrast, *Abbey Road*, an album, like others before, that was not conceived for live performance and indifferent to its fanbase, lies apart from these developments. While representative of the end of the Beatles’ brilliant career, the album still remains problematic to place within rock history. This talk will place *Abbey Road* within the context of the musical developments of 1969 by focusing on the issues of live performance and the new modes of composition, using as case studies work by the Rolling Stones, The Who, and the new material coming from America.

Andy Flory (Carleton College)

“Billy’s Song: Billy Preston and the Beatles”

During 1969 and early 1970, the Beatles’ longstanding interest in African-American music led to a series of creative collaborations with Billy Preston. Preston played an important role in the Get Back sessions, performing in the January 1969 rooftop concert and recording a number of tracks that would later appear on *Let It Be*. As these sessions morphed into a more studio-oriented album project, Preston contributed to two tracks that would later appear on the *Abbey Road* collection: “Something” and “I Want You (She’s So Heavy).” Preston’s long and varied history in the American R&B market and his role in the Beatles

provide a vital perspective on the group's ongoing relationship with people and styles commonly associated with the American R&B market.

7:30-8:45 Keynote (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair and moderator: Walter Everett (University of Michigan)

Andy Babiuk (Rochester, NY)
"The Beatles, Their Instruments, and *Abbey Road*"

9:00-10:00 After Hours (Hatch Recital Hall)
Moderator: John Covach (Eastman School of Music/University of Rochester)

Bruce Spizer (New Orleans, LA)
"The Beatles Get Back to *Abbey Road*"

Sunday, September 29

9:00-10:30 Session 9 (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: Noriko Manabe (Temple University)

Bruce Pilato (University of Rochester)
"*Abbey Road* as the Perfect Storm"

Abbey Road was a very positive and uplifting record and one of the albums that most people and music critics agree was apex of The Beatles' career. I will explore how the record was made at probably the worst time in the Beatles' personal relationships. I will consider many records—such as Fleetwood Mac's *Rumors*, The Who's *Who's Next*, The Jimi Hendrix Experience's *Electric Ladyland*, The Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks* and others—that were made at the most tense and angriest times in those bands' careers. When these groups entered the recording studio, however, it was neutral ground: the war was off and the music reigned supreme.

Nicole Biamonte (McGill University)
"Groovin' Up Slowly: Meter and Rhythm in *Abbey Road*"

In this paper I examine aspects of meter, rhythm, and tempo in The Beatles' album *Abbey Road*. I discuss and compare large-scale trajectories of tempo, meter, and intensity and saturation of metric and rhythmic dissonance across the album as a whole; consider rhythmic and metric shifts as they relate to form in the songs "I Want You," "Here Comes the Sun," and the famous Side 2 medley; and examine interactions of rhythm and phrase in "Come Together" and "Because." Although *Abbey Road* is not as metrically and rhythmically complex as *Sgt. Pepper*, there is nonetheless much of analytical interest.

10:45-12:15 Session 10a (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: Philip Mosley (Penn State, Scranton)

Matthias Heyman (University of Antwerp)
"Recreating *Abbey Road*: Historically Informed Performance in The Analogues"

With more than 600 (semi-)professional tribute bands worldwide, The Beatles are the most frequently imitated pop band. While they come in many forms and guises, most such tribute bands have at least two things in common: (1) they limit themselves to the "hits" that are relatively easy to reproduce, i.e., the repertoire The Beatles themselves performed live before they decided, in August 1966, to stop touring; and (2) they emphasize The Beatles' visual aspects, reproducing the appropriate costumes and hairstyles, also imitating on-stage

mannerisms and Scouse banter. In doing so, such bands offer their audiences a much-desired commodity: the possibility to “witness” a Beatles show firsthand. By contrast, the Dutch band The Analogues approach such re-enactment quite differently. They focus on the music created after 1966, which relied heavily on intricate studio techniques and elaborate arrangements that, due to productional and economic factors, are difficult to recreate live. The Analogues disregard all mimetic visual effects and strive for complete aural accuracy by using the exact analog instrumentation as The Beatles did. In doing so, The Analogues offer their audiences the opportunity to finally hear the six last studio albums performed live in their exactitude. This paper will consider The Analogues’ rendition of *Abbey Road* to explore how historically informed performance practice (HIPP) is used in an experimental manner outside of its more traditional realm of classical music. While the band employs certain methods similar to those used in mainstream HIPP contexts, such as iconographical analysis, it operates within an entirely different framework, foregrounding recorded rather than notated music.

Karen Duchaj (Northeastern Illinois University)

“You Should See Polythene Pam: Performance of Dialect as a Means of Indexing Social Characteristics”

The Beatles’ *Abbey Road* album includes the brief Lennon song “Polythene Pam” (henceforth “PP”), depicting a fictional character. I argue that the Pam character is painted not in lyrics alone but in pronunciation, using the sociolinguistic framework of indexicality. Discussing “PP,” Lennon said, “I used a thick Liverpool accent.” As a Liverpool native, he was familiar with this dialect. However, since its “thickest” form was typically associated with provinciality and lesser education, Lennon was raised by his middle-class aunt not to use it, and neither his speech nor singing showed the most extreme forms. Its use in “PP” was deliberate. The salience of Liverpool dialect was obvious to the other Beatles. Harrison, quoting the above line with emphasis on the [ɫ:] pronunciation, said, “I liked ‘Polythene Pam’ because of its Liverpool-ness.” In “PP”, Lennon exhibited “high-performance” in that he consciously utilized linguistic features not his own in a public medium to elicit a connection to a theme or persona, creating these connections through indexing between language/dialect features and social characteristics.

Richard Mills (St Mary’s University, London)

“Their Most Iconic Album Cover? *Abbey Road*, Cultural Tourism, Beatles Fandom and Progressive Nostalgia”

The *Abbey Road* cover is the most enduring and famous in the Beatle canon because it is a famous London landmark that is easy to visit and it gives fans the opportunity to recreate the cover (traffic permitting) without much difficulty. My paper will discuss cultural tourism and Beatles Fandom with reference to the *Abbey Road* album cover. In 1969 fans appropriated new meanings by reading and creating the ‘Paul is dead’ conspiracy clues on the album cover. It is fascinating that Beatles fans are now fans of tourist destinations, and as Urry and Larson argue “The “gaze” despite being largely “performed” through architectural theming and representations, is “never predetermined and fully predictable.” Paul Booth suggests that fandom is “situated between commercial concerns and resistant hegemonies.” In a sense, Beatles fandom and cultural tourism at *Abbey Road*, resists fixity and floats between passivity and transgression in a fluid and radical “third space.” The tourist gaze is not “fully predictable” although it is couched in the machinery of the industrial superstructure. Fans originally translated the *Abbey Road* cover into an unpredictable and transgressive conspiracy theories, which is continued by the irreverent appropriation of the *Abbey Road*. The 24-hour live web cam recording all the fan activity at *Abbey Road* is an example of fan translating Beatles iconography into something new.

Session 10b (Messenger 1)

Chair: Elizabeth Randell Upton (UCLA)

Don Traut (University of Arizona, Tucson)

"I Know You, You Know Me: *Abbey Road* through the Lens of Actor-Network Theory"

This paper uses "Actor-Network Theory" (ANT) to study and contextualize some of the many connections and relationships that led to and developed from *Abbey Road* and—by extension—the people and places involved in its creation. Developed primarily by sociologists, ANT is a methodology for illuminating the influence and agency of various "actors"—be they human or otherwise—in a given context. One strategy is to study how the actions (i.e., mediations) of particular actors create networks that, when taken together, form a coherent whole. As Benjamin Piekut put it recently, ANT is akin to a type of historical ecology, "a web of relations, an amalgamation of organic and inorganic, or biological and technological, elements that are interconnecting and mutually affecting." By adopting this methodology, the analyst is free to treat songs and recordings in the same manner as people. Thus, not only are the four Beatles "actors" in this network, but so too are *Abbey Road* the album, *Abbey Road* the studio, Apple Records, and anyone else who influenced the network(s) surrounding the album's creation.

Aaron Krerowicz (Ball State University)

"Multifunctional Harmony in the Beatles Music"

In his book *Hearing Harmony*, Christopher Doll argues that harmonic functions are best described by distance before tonic. He proposes Greek letters to be shorthand to illustrate that distance: α = tonic, β = pretonic, γ = pre-pretonic, δ = pre-prepretonic, ϵ = pre-preprepretonic, etc. Multi-functional harmony, then, occurs when a single chord (for example, IV) performs at least two different functions, and thus is labeled with at least two different Greek letters. Applying Doll's Greek letters to Beatles music allows listeners to better understand how harmony works in Beatles songs. Not all Beatles songs employ multi-functional harmony, but many of them do. Looking at the album *Abbey Road* as a whole, 13 of the 17 tracks employ at least one multi-functional chord, and five tracks employ at least two. Overall, the album contains twelve multi-functional chords. This presentation will look closely at how the Beatles use multi-functional harmony throughout their recordings, with particular emphasis on their sophisticated handling of harmony on *Abbey Road*.

Gabriel Lubell (Indiana University)

"*Abbey Road's* Unoccupied Spaces"

Many of *Abbey Road's* musical, physical, and technical properties emphasize the concepts of space and silence. Despite the album's musical bounty, its own contents contribute to a discourse that is as much about what is absent as is present. Attention is frequently drawn to the spaces between voices, instruments, sounds, and songs, with important ramifications for our understanding of the album's overall effectiveness. Drawing on texts from the disciplines of media theory, phenomenology, music perception, and traditional methodologies of music analysis, I intend to examine the nature and meaning of these overlooked, yet profoundly important, unoccupied spaces. The awareness of unoccupied space within the sound of *Abbey Road* can largely be traced to the album's production history and use of eight-track recording equipment. Given the sophisticated and rich mixes they had achieved on previous albums, using two- and four-track tape, one might have expected a corresponding increase in the sonic complexity of their last. Yet the sound of *Abbey Road* is noticeably clear and spare—relative to their earlier work, the space of the multitrack tape is underutilized. In general, fewer instruments were layered onto each available track, and the application of stereo mixing further helps to isolate sounds from one another; every track receives its own place in the stereo field, and no mono mix of the album was produced. Though this

represents part of a progression towards aural simplicity that began after *Magical Mystery Tour*, the decision to focus on low-density sounds and textures should be understood in its own right. The plenteousness of eight-track tape apparently served as a call for transparency and order over convoluted polyphonic machinations.

**1:00-3:00 Session 11 and Conference Wrap-Up (Hatch Recital Hall)
Chair: Susan Ryan (Fab 4 NYC Walking Tours)**

Gary Astridge (Buffalo, NY)

"The Complexity and Simplicity of Ringo's Drumming on *Abbey Road*"

Ken Townsend (engineer and General Manager, Abbey Road Studios)

"Abbey Road in Words and Pictures"

John Covach (Eastman School of Music and University of Rochester)

"And in the End: A Few Concluding Remarks"

Program Committee: Katie Kapurch, John Covach (chair), Walter Everett.

Abstracts edited by John Covach.

With a little help from my friends: Thanks to the many members of the faculty, staff, and administration at the University of Rochester and Eastman School of Music for their work in bringing this conference together. Special thanks go out to Jamal Rossi for his unflagging support, and to Wendy Borden and Jimmy Warlick for helping take care of every little thing.

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